



Four Celebrations of New Year's Day

NEW YEAR is celebrated in this country at least on four different dates in addition to the regular national New Year's celebration on January 1. The first of these foreign celebrations will be that of the Greeks and Russians and a few other nationalities, which adhere to old style dates. They will have New Year on January 14, 13 days later than the New Year of the new style. Next in order comes the Chinese New Year, on February 13 and, but a day later, February 14, comes the Mohammedan first day of the year. The Jewish New Year falls nearly nine months later, about the middle of September, on the first day of the month of "Tishri."

The celebrations vary both in accordance with the religions of the various peoples and their climatic, racial and national characteristics. With the Greeks, Russians, Servians, Bulgarians and Macedonians, all of whom adhere to the Greek Catholic church, New Year's is one of the most pleasant if not the pleasantest festival of the year. With the Jews, on the contrary, the New Year, Rosh Hashana, as it is called, is far from being a pleasant affair. It is a day of retribution, of judgment. It is preceded by weeks of prayer, fasting and penitence, and is followed by ten days known as the days of repentance, which wind up with Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, a most gruesome and weird day, dreaded by every orthodox Jew.

Greeks Celebrate Two Days.

The most interesting and joyous celebration of the New Year is that of the Greeks. The Greek New Year lasts two days. In these two days the Greek nature with its unbounded joy of life comes into its own. The heart of every Greek thrills on that day with unbounded joy. Passionately he awaits the evening, when in his little Greece, in a genuine Greek restaurant, with male cooks and attendants, he can get his genuine Greek food, Hellenic dishes, and wash them away with Greek wine which was purposely imported into this country for the holidays.

"Christmas is a great holiday with us," said a prominent Greek, "but it is after all a solemn day. It is a religious holiday. No gifts are exchanged on Christmas and the three days which the holiday last are given over to religious meditation. How different it is with the New Year! Next to our national holiday on March 25, which commemorates the date of our independence, just as July 4 commemorates the birth of the American nation, New Year's days, for we have two of them, are our greatest holidays. In Greece New Year is essentially a family holiday. There we have a children's afternoon which is devoted entirely to the young ones, who are given the utmost opportunities to enjoy themselves. In this country, however, it is slightly different. Out of the 15,000 Greeks living in Chicago only 200 have their families here. There are only between sixty and eighty children, and as we are only just planning to build a school of our

own, we have not yet the means nor the call for a children's afternoon on New Year's day."

Still, many of the Greek families will observe this ancient custom in this country. They will have their children's afternoon. They will have their delicious New Year's pudding known as "king's pudding." In fact, in many cases the pudding will be even more delicious than it would have been in old Athens. For one of the ancient customs among the Greeks is to hide some gold coin in one portion of the pudding and he who gets the share of the pudding with the gold coin in it becomes the favorite as well as the leader of the two days' joy and sport. In this country, where gold is more plentiful than in Greece, and where it is more easily earned by the Greek father, the pudding promises to contain more gold and be much more delightful to the finder of the same.

Perhaps the most unique Greek dish on New Year's eve is the roast lamb, set up in Greek style, of which each son of Hellenia must partake. The roasting of the lamb is attended with a great deal of pomp. The entire carcass of a lamb is set up on a pole and this is held over a fire until it is duly roasted. Then it is sliced and apportioned among the various persons present at the feast and the roast is eaten along with the other strictly Greek dishes and washed down with Greek wine.

Russians Like Our Food.

Russians in this country celebrate but one day, and they, too, attempt to produce a home atmosphere. However, home food is not thought of. The bread, the meat, and the wine of the United States are considered as good as and even far better than the products of their own land.

The Macedonians, Servians and Bulgarians celebrate the New Year, perhaps less elaborately, also on the same day as their Greek and Russian compatriots.

The Chinese celebrate their first of the year with the modesty characteristic of people who have not yet any hold on a place.

The Chinese will have their customary celebration of the Chinese New Year on February 13 with feasting and enjoyment with which the holiday is observed in the Celestial empire.

In striking opposition to the spirit of joy and happiness which pervades the New Year of the Greeks and Christendom generally is the New Year of the Jews. With the Jews, who also observe the New Year for two days, the days are not days of feasting and enjoyment but days of judgment. According to the belief of every orthodox Jew, every member of the Jewish race is tried on the New Year. The books kept in heaven are opened on that day, the record of each man for the year just ending is looked through, and taken under advisement for ten days. On the tenth day, the day of atonement, the fate of each man for the coming year is drawn up, whether he should live or die, prosper or be poor. On the day of atonement the fate is sealed and nothing can change it any more.

Turning the New Leaf

With reverent heart we turn anew
An untouched page of time.
'Tis ours to fill with noble deeds
Or stain with sin and crime;
Then ere we mar its surface pure
Ere we begin anew,
'Tis well that o'er our last year's work
We take a short review.

Alas! we scan through tears the page
We meant should be so fair—
The blotted page where records live
Of hope and toil and care;
The page that ends the finished year
Of loss and gain and strife,
Of love and home's sweet happiness,
And peace that blesses life.

So much there is of pleasantness
Our record has to tell
And so much done unworthily
We might have done so well!
Though mental retrospection shows
That shine exceeds the shade;
Too late we would erase the blots
Of past mistakes we made.

Then turn the new leaf. Look not back
To grieve o'er loss and pain.
But view the future's spotless page
Where we begin again;
And here resolve, by God's own grace,
That we will do our best
To keep life's record clean and pure
And trust Him for the rest.

—Margaret Scott Hall.

As the Years Mark Time for Mankind



The old-fashioned sun dial, after all, was the true time piece. That little pocket sun dial that we are told counted all the hours "when the sun shone" made the perfect record of human days. The noisy clocks and remorseless calendars that told off the worst and weariest of time's movements literally spoiled the reckoning. History began to build itself upon the

wretchedness of a people, and all creation to take note of time by its loss instead of its golden gain in the hours of perfect sunlight.

But the reaction has set in. It is the glad hours and not the sad ones that are to be made to count.

Let us carry awhile
At the sign of the smile
Is the watchword which even pious pilgrims are sending out to upset the ancient reckoning. "Let the smile become the Christian's rather than the devil's sign" they cry in chorus, and the joy of the spirit becomes the measure of its days. Good Isaac Barrow's picture of the child of heaven "smiling always with a never-ending serenity of countenance and flourishing in an immortal youth" has at last taken hold of the Christian world and, spurred on by the new thought rhapsodies, promises to turn back the calendar of all our days. Counting time by heart throbs is a new method, to be sure, but the kind of heart throbs that "always find man young and always keep him so" were rather lost with the sun and nature worship of the early world.

When men went to nature for their reckoning it was as Wordsworth tells us:

As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the stone
On which they gazed themselves away.

Centuries young were those children of the morning, before even the sun dial had begun to tell them of the flight of time. It remains true still that whether nature or the soul strikes the joy-note in the human breast, the poet's question rises instinctively to the lips:

O what have I to do with time,
For this the day was made.

Man Has His Choice.

Good or bad, the years come out of the bosom of the infinite bearing some boon from the eternal for man to lay hold of if he will. To choose the permanent from the mutable and fleeting is the life secret they carry, and how much hangs upon the choice eternity alone can tell. There are watchmen at the gates who assure us that each year brings gifts peculiar to itself, and one year or one world does not restore the lost offerings of the other. "Long after we have passed away out of men's sight and out of men's memory the world with something that we have left within it, will be going on still," says Phillips Brooks, "and long after the world has passed away we shall go on somewhere, somehow, the same beings still, carrying into the depths of eternity something that the world has done for us that no other world could do."

Alexander Mocked.

New worlds, with each new year,
To conquer, mock the cry of Alexander
And declare indeed a new kingdom
wherein to reign. Closer and closer
comes the promise of that awakening
hour when man shall in truth become
"a living soul," and "with an eye
made quiet by the power of harmony,
and the deep power of joy," shall "see

into the life of things." How many a rose of morning and ripe fruit of the golden noon shall then return to him the science of life, which permits no lost good, nor wasted atom, even in all creation's bounds, may gloriously declare. "Where are the snows of yesterday?" whispers the tender poet, but the green of spring and the bloom of summer are nature's answer to his yearning cry.

And shall man be less blessed than nature in garnering the treasures of the year? Is that evil genius, that the ancients beheld standing at the door of the new year, forever to give lethe to drink that he may wander blindly into the unknown way, shorn of the best boons and talismans of the past? Ah, the poets who try life and love know better.

Each new year is a leaf of our love's tree.
It falls, but quick another rose leaf grows.
So is the flower from year to year the same.
But riches for the dead leaves feed the flame.

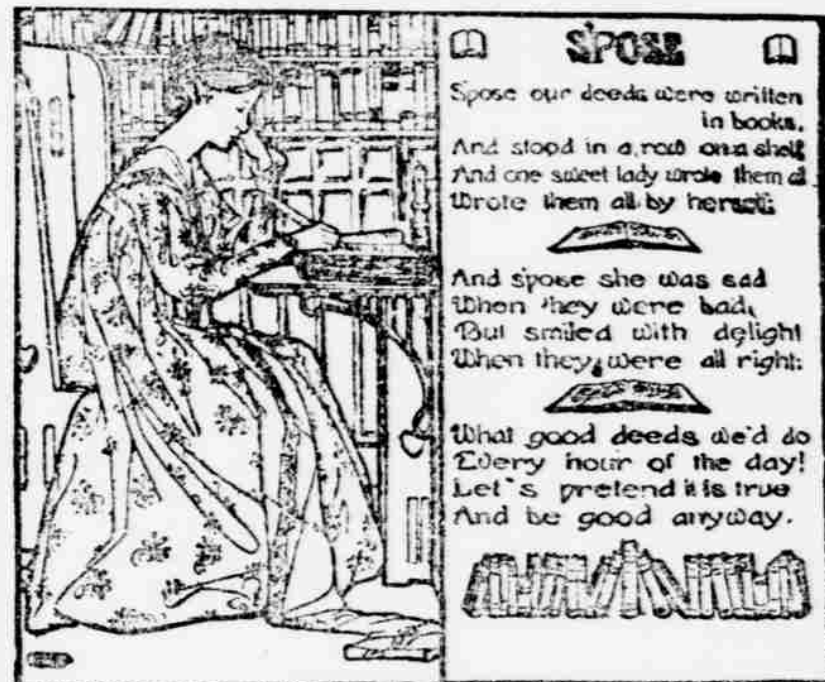
Thus they read the riddle and the "million-centuries" sweetness that goes with it today. Neither is man dragged by any god or genius but the one within him, that he may "tell no tales" and carry no tokens from the departing year. What he tells to cheer or depress his comrades, what he carries to help or hinder both them and himself, is in the power of his own open-eyed choice. Perhaps the best hint that was ever offered to guide him is the brief and pointed one given by the sage, when he writes: "A man should make life and nature happier to us, or he had better never been born." It is the one pre-eminent life in the air at the present moment. It would fill all the newspapers in the land and drive the quotation-abhorring editors mad if one-quarter of the stout maxims of this nature which the times offer should demand place in their columns. Already their humorous writers are trying to demoralize them and send some of the cheerful and cheering-up people over to his Satanic majesty, where no doubt they are needed since the dry season set in.

Life's Logic Quaint.

If there be such a Satanic monarch, probably he loves the cheerful sinner just as heaven must love the cheerful saint. Yet the logic of life is against him. The snail is not legitimately the devil's sign. It is the pessimist who is playing into his hands, treating his sovereignty as if it could overthrow heaven's and all the power of the Eternal Goodness. To act as if they had a faith worth smiling over would seem to be the attitude of men who believed in a sovereign of love and omnipotence rather than one of malice and black arts, and it may be that the Christian world is at last finding it out. Certainly the Gospel evangel "Rejoice, rejoice" is sounding anew through all the realms of Christendom and becoming a part of culture and philosophy everywhere. Fuller's counsel: "Be happy in the present moment and put not off being so to a time to come, as though that time should be of another make from this," prevails in the intellectual as religious world, and promises to show "the world as it really is."

Life's Logic Quaint.

A NEW YEAR RESOLUTION



Entering the New Year

Take up the ark of the covenant and pass over Jordan, Joshua 3:14.

The long journey in the wilderness is over. The endless marches of sand will haunt the tired eyes of the pilgrims no longer. Beyond the swiftly-siding river lies Canaan, the Land of Promise.

Joshua is a born leader of men and as such knows what they will do, if appealed to in the right way. The River Jordan flows between the Promised Land and his followers. It must be crossed. With the same feeling that afterward animated Douglas as he took from his breast the jeweled heart of the dead Bruce and flung it over the heads of the advancing foe, shouting: "Fight, my men, for the heart of Bruce!" so Joshua, with the deep religious consciousness of a Jew, gives the order to carry forward the Ark of the Covenant. No one of his followers will dream of lagging behind when he sees that sacred symbol in front. And so, following in the footsteps of the priests, the people, old and young, cross the Jordan and enter upon a new phase of their national life.

The parallel between our case, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, and the Jews on the eve of their entering Canaan is so apparent that it can be seen at once. As the tired wanderers from Egypt stood facing the Promised Land, so do you and I stand facing 1909.

How are we going to commence our journey in the new year? Joshua,

SPOKE
Spose our deeds were written
In books,
And stood in a row on a shelf
And one sweet lady wrote them all
Wrote them all by herself.

And spose she was sad
When they were bad,
But smiled with delight
When they were all right.

What good deeds we'd do
Every hour of the day!
Let's pretend it is true
And be good anyway.



New Year's in Manila

To occidental eyes New Year's day in Manila is a strange olla podrida of Christmas, Easter and Fourth of July, says the New York Press. The day is ushered in with early mass, celebrated in the cathedral, which is attended by all the women attired in old clothes, and the poorer class barefooted and the wealthy in somber black, with black mantillas or shawls, shrouding their heads. But immediately after breakfast everybody begins to drink and preen for callers. Raven locks are plastered into elaborate coiffures with cocoanut oil and crowned with red or yellow blossoms, or in the case of a maiden who expects her lover to pay his respects to her on the New Year with the sweet starry flowers of the jessamine, which are called throughout the island the "flowers of San Paquito," who is the patron saint of lovers. Stiff, trailing skirts of gay brocade and antebellum cut are donned, wide flowing sleeves of embroidered pina gauze and ample neckerchiefs of the same filmy material are adjusted and there is a tinkling of many bangle bracelets as the fair ones seat themselves to wait the arrival of the first caller.

His entrance is the signal for the jam pot to be brought in. This takes

the place of the steaming punch bowl of other lands, and is passed from hand to hand, each one taking a spoonful, no more, and everybody using the same spoon. It would be considered an unpardonable breach of etiquette to refuse to partake. The jam is followed by coffee, which is served very black and strong, and is half sugar. Strong, black cigars are next produced, and everybody lights up, including the hostess. It is a shock to the occidental mind to see young girls of 15 or 16 puffing away at long cigars, but every one smokes in the Philippines. The Spanish women usually confine themselves to cigarettes.

Many of the callers bring their guitars or mandolins, and there is always a little music. Some of the convent-bred girls are really excellent performers on the harp or piano, but pianos are always out of tune, owing to the damp climate. Impromptu concerts are organized, and occasionally there is skirt dancing, in which the Filipino women excel, many elderly dames who are "heavyweights" executing the difficult native dances with a grace, agility and ease which would turn a New York or London music hall artist green with envy.

Real Purpose of Life

St. James asks: "What is thy life?" and his own answer to the question is: "For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." The brevity of life has been the subject of deep thought and of anxious solicitude in all ages of the world. The poet tells us: "Our birth is nothing but our death begun." It is likened to a dream, a shadow, a vapor, a swift flying cloud, or the autumn leaf. Such is life! this life we are living away; this life that will so soon be over; this life on whose transient breath hangs everlasting destiny.

But we fail to appreciate life's meaning if we spend our time in sighing over its brevity. Life is not merely a vapor that presently vanisheth. It is a journey to a fixed destination. We are not only going, but we are going somewhere; not into the depths of a mystic solitude to be extinguished and forgotten. Our destiny is not annihilation and nothingness. To go for-

ward aimlessly is the most inexcusable folly. To have around him all the evidences of God—and never to see them—to look upon a thousand church spires that point to an eternal life, and miss all their meanings, to be in a land of Bibles that reveals God's purposes for man's eternal destiny and be ignorant of his own end is indeed a negligence which it is difficult to comprehend. It is not death but life that is before us, not earthly life alone, but life a thread running interminably through the warp of eternity. Life is given us to be used with a view to its eternal destiny. To use it so as to give the soul room for its unfolding capacities, to use it to promote the highest good, to use it so as to make the most of it, that is to have before us a high and true ideal and the greatest hope for any event that can possibly follow. If we but work out our destiny according to the divine purpose it cannot fail to be eternal glory.

